

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 AID-05 IGA-02 MC-02 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-05 EB-07 SS-15 NSC-05

TRSE-00 COME-00 /064 W

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R 051450Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8883

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2061

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINS, MASS, LE

SUBJ: ASSISTANCE FOR LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES

1. HISHAM SHA'AR, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (ISF), AGAIN RAISED WITH DATT FEW DAYS AGO ISF DESIRE FOR UNIFORMS AND OTHER ITEMS TO BE PROVIDED BY U.S. ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL THIS WAS RAISED ON JAN 28 AS REPORTED USDAO'S 078 301421Z JAN 76, PARA 2. ENUMERATED WERE FIELD CLOTHING, BOOTS, RIFLES, MOTOR VEHICLES, AND ARMORED CARS, WITH QUANTITIES INDEFINITE BUT CONCERNING AN ISF OF ABOUT 7,000 MEN. REQUEST WAS MADE FOR GRANT AID IF POSSIBLE.

2. DATT TOLD SHA'AR ON THAT OCCASION AND AGAIN ON MARCH 3 THAT REQUEST WOULD HAVE TO BE PUT THROUGH GOL CHANNELS. SHA'AR TOLD DATT INTERIOR MINISTER CHAMOUN WOULD BE PREPARING A LETTER WHICH HE WOULD DISCUSS WITH CHARGE D'AFFAIRS. I HAVE HEARD NOTHING YET FROM CHAMOUN, AND IT MAY BE PLANS WILL CHANGE, BUT REQUEST IS LIKELY TO BE PUT THROUGH ONE CHANNEL OR ANOTHER ONCE AGAIN. DEPENDING ON HOW REQUEST CAME, WE MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL HERE TO BRING IT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

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3. WE NOTE NEW GOL CREDITS ARE BEING CONSIDERED FOR

ISF (FIRST TRANCHE REPORTED IN THE PRESS MARCH 4 AS PROBABLY 18 MILLION LEBANESE POUNDS, OR ABOUT 7.5 MILLION DOLLARS).

4. I BELIEVE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BEGIN TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO NATURE OF OUR RESPONSE WHEN AN OFFICIAL REQUEST EVENTUALLY REACHES US. IF THERE WERE CHANCES OF LEBANON QUALIFYING UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS FOR GRANT AID, A SMALL AMOUNT OF IT COULD BE A VERY USEFUL GESTURE POLITICALLY. IT WOULD HELP COUNTER ANTI-AMERICAN FEELINGS IN SOME QUARTERS GROWING OUT OF OUR FAILURE TO INTERVENE IN RECENT CRISIS, AND HELP MAINTAIN OUR TRADITIONALLY GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH LEBANESE SECURITY FORCES. SHOULD THE PROCESS OF QUALIFYING LEBANON BE TOO DIFFICULT AND TIME CONSUMING, GOL CAN PROBABLY FIND THE MONEY FOR WHAT IT NEEDS.

5. AS TO SPECIFICS MENTIONED, WE WOULD SEE NO OBJECTIONS TO FIELD CLOTHING, BOOTS, AND SOME MOTOR VEHICLES AT THIS TIME. RIFLES AND ARMORED CARS ARE ITEMS WHICH DISAPPEARED AT A VERY RAPID RATE DURING RECENT FIGHTING AND COULD DISAPPEAR AGAIN AS LONG AS ISF IS AS DEMORALIZED AND DISORGANIZED AS AT PRESENT. WE WOULD THEREFORE RECOMMEND A POSITIVE REPLY ON THE CLOTHING AND CIVILIAN VEHICLES AND AN EXPLANATION AS TO WHY THE OTHER THINGS WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED OVER A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME. WE BELIEVE THIS EXPLANATION WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY ISF LEADERSHIP, PARTICULARLY AS IT MIGHT HELP THEM GET GOL SUPPORT FOR RECOVERING SOME OF THE LOST EQUIPMENT. DEPENDING ON HOW RAPIDLY ISF APPEARED TO BE REORGANIZING ITSELF, DECISION ON RIFLES AND ARMORED CARS COULD BE MADE LATER. WHILE THIS MIGHT RESULT IN ORDERS FOR THESE ITEMS GOING TO SOME OTHER COUNTRY, I DO NOT BELIEVE COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES IN THIS CASE OUTWEIGHT POLITICAL DISADVANTAGES.

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